(b) whether it is also a fact that the BCCL is giving contracts for the transportation of coal and sand to private contractors instead of departmentalising these works;

(c) whether it is also a fact that these contractors are putting the BCCL to losses running into crores of rupees; and

(d) if so, what are the reasons for non-departmentalisation of the transportation of coal and sand by the BCCL?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF COAL IN THE MINISTRY OF ENERGY (SHRI C. K. JAFFAR SHARIEF): (a) It is a fact that several steps have been taken jointly by the State Government, the local District Administration and the management of the BCCL to curb Mafia activities in Jharia Coalfields

(b) to (d) The policy of the company is to fully departmentalise internal transportation of coal. However, use of private contractors to meet special contingencies becomes necessary, at times, specially to clear heavy accumulation of stocks at pitheads or to maintain/increase the level of wagon loading. As regards transportation of sand, while some quantities are being transported departmentally, it has not been found practicable to go in for full departmentalisation. Seasonal nature of sand gathering shifting sources of its supply, making infrastructure created for sand collection at heavy cost totally infructuous at short intervals, non-accessibility to roads leading to sand gathering points as these pass through private lands and poor economies are some of the chief considerations against total departmentalisation of transportation of sand. It is, however, not a fact that transportation through contractors is more costly leading to increased losses by the company.

Setting up of Non-Conventional Energy Sources

1148. PROF. C. LAKSHMANNA: Will the Minister of ENERGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether in view of the critical power position Government will set up a Technology Commission to set up non-conventional energy sources like Bio-gas etc.; and

(b) what specific efforts would be made to utilise abundantly, available solar energy for augmenting power generation in the country?

THE MINISTER OF ENERGY AND THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI VASANT SATHE): (a) and (b) The Government has already set up a Commission for Additional Sources of Energy with following functions:—

(i) Formulating policies and programmes for development of new and renewawble sources of energy;

(ii) Coordinating and intensifying research and development activities in new and renewable sources of energy;

(iii) Ensuring Implementation of Government's policies in regard to all matters concerning new and renewable sources of energy.

Department of Non-Conventional Energy sources is implementing a country-wide programme of utilisation of various non-conventional energy sources. Over 9 lac biogas plants and 35 lac improved chullahs have been installed in the country. These and the other projects in the area of solar, wind, bio-gas etc. including small power generation have already started to provide

substantial benefits to the users particularly in rural areas. The wider use of non-conventional sources of energy including solar energy for power generation would depend on the availability of financial re-sources.

Purchase of Crude Oil

1149. SHRI V. NARAYANASAMY: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government have decided to purchase a large quantity of crude oil as compared to last year;

(b) if so, what is the total amount that would be spent by way of foreign exchange for purchase of crude oil for this year;

(c) whether Government has negotiated with any foreign companies for purchase of crude oil; and

(d) if so, which are the companies and what is the price of crude oil per barrel?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI RAFIQUE ALAM): (a) A quantity of 18.34 million tonnes of crude oil is estimated to be imported during the current year as compared to 15.5 million tonnes imported during the previous year.

(b) It is estimated that an amount of Rs. 3104 crores would be spent on import of crude oil during the current year.

(c) and (d) Some of the imports are made on term contracts and the rest on the spot market. The term contracts are signed with the National Oil Companies of the exporting countries like USSR, Iraq, Saudi Arabia, UAE, Iran and Kuwait and the prices are generally official prices as fixed by OPEC.

Construction of Balrampur Thermal Power Station

1150. SHRI BEKAL UTSAHI: Will the Minister of ENERGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether the proposed construction of thermal power stations at Balrampur in Gonda district and Suhawal in Faizabad district of UP is not taking place since long; if so, what are the reasons therefor; and

(b) whether Government propose to start the construction work in the near future or there is any proposal to assign the same to private parties?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF POWER IN THE MINISTRY OF ENERGY (SHRIMATI SUSHILA ROHATGI): (a) and (b) No proposal in regard to a thermal power station at Balrampur in Gonda district or at Suhawal in Faizabad district in U.P. has been received in the Central Electricity Authority. However, a thermal power station with four units of 110 MW each is presently under construction by the U.P. State Electricity Board at Tanda in Faizabad district.

Work on Koel Karo Hydro-Electric Project

1151. SHRI CHATURANAN MISHRA: Will the Minister of ENERGY be pleased to refer to the answer to Unstarred Question 2964 given in the Rajya Sabha on the 7th December, 1987 and state:

(a) whether the work on the Koel Karo Project in Chotta Nagpur-Santhal Pargana region of Bihar has since been commenced; if so, what are the details thereof; and

(b) if not, what are the reasons therefor and what steps are being taken to expedite its completion?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF POWER IN THE MINISTRY OF ENERGY (SHRIMATI SUSHILA ROHATGI): (a) and (b) The work on Koel Karo Hydro-electric Project is held up du